

THE TROUBLE WITH TULLIVER

Astro, Seer of Secrets, Helps a Worried District Attorney

BY ALAN BRAGHAMPTON

Drawing by George Brehm

I NOTICE that most of the talk about Tulliver's running for Governor has stopped," said Astro, dropping his morning paper and looking over to where Valeska, his assistant, was copying horoscopes from the master's notes.

"I'm disappointed," she replied. "There seemed to be hope for the regeneration of the city government at last. It is strange how he has let up on the prosecution of those Brooklyn Aldermen, isn't it?"

"Strange? How?" Astro gazed at her keenly; but it was perfectly evident that he was confident of his own opinion.

"Why, he began so well and so strenuously; and then, just before the case was to be brought for trial, he seems to have dropped the whole thing. It doesn't seem to be like what we know of his character, somehow."

"Do you believe that he's been fixed?" Astro bent his dark brows.

"You never can tell nowadays. But he's such a fighter ordinarily that it looks suspicious. Why, I've heard extraordinary tales of his persistence and his energy. He takes no more sleep than Edison,—he works night and day, and can do usually four times as much work as an ordinary man could in similar circumstances."

Astro nodded his picturesque, dark head thoughtfully, and took his customary seat on the divan by his water pipe. With a toss of his hand he threw his red silken robe about his legs. The moonstone aigret in his oriental turban nodded rhythmically as he thought it over. Finally he said:

"The District Attorney has not been bribed, Valeska, I'm sure of that. I have seen him and talked with him. I've studied his hand, his face, his gait, his voice, his gesture. Money can't buy that man. He not only has the energy you speak of, Valeska, he has a tremendous moral force besides. There is no graft in Tulliver. But there's something wrong. This lack of power, just when he ought to strike hardest, is suspicious. It's sinister. I tell you!" he added, rising, as the idea caught and held him with a new force. "This gang of boodlers has got him somehow! It's not a square fight!"

Valeska came up to him, more than commonly moved by his emotion. "Oh!" she exclaimed, taking his hand, "why can't you help him, if there is a plot? I'd like to see you try your hand at something more worth while than mere murders and boudoir mysteries. You're wasting your talents on such ordinary detective work. Why not offer your services? Why not take up the fight for him, and with him, if it's possible, and help him win? You'll never have a more worthy cause!"

In her excitement her voice had become vibrant, thrilling with a warm, personal note not wholly accounted for by her words. Astro perceived it, glanced at her, turned away suddenly. His voice had changed too, when he said:

"Shall I offer my services?"

"Oh, do!"

"You know that it is not my policy nor my custom to do that."

"It's your duty."

He swung round to her and took both her hands in a strong grip. "If you ask me, Valeska, I'll do it."

And so Astro undertook to discover what was the trouble with Tulliver.

IT was a delicate proceeding, at first, and it involved upon Valeska herself to undertake the initial steps. It was three or four days before she had gone over the ground well enough to select the point of attack; but at the end of that time she had made up her mind that Mrs. Tulliver was in the line of least resistance to her efforts.

It did not take long for Valeska to discover that Mrs. Tulliver had a baby, and that the baby had a nurse; that the two went every fine morning to take the air in Central Park. In two days Valeska was there also with a baby borrowed for the occasion. Valeska waited at the corner of Fifth-ave. and East 64th-st., until little Alice Tulliver and her nurse came down the steps of the Tulliver house. After that it was easy to make connections in the

park and to happen to sit down at the same bench. To anyone who watched Valeska's whimsical charm, and pretty, expressive face, a confidential acquaintanceship, if possible,—and Valeska took care to make it possible,—was inevitable and the most natural thing in the world.

In such wise Valeska soon learned that Tulliver was suffering from what the doctors were pleased to term nervous prostration; that he had been advised to take a rest; and that Mrs. Tulliver was much worried over the situation. Mrs. Tulliver was ambitious and took great interest in her husband's political career. There was an atmosphere of great anxiety at the house on 64th-st.

Valeska was a willing and sympathetic listener, and watched her chance for interposition. It came unexpectedly the very next day, when Mrs. Tulliver herself came across the two engaged in conversation on a park bench. There was little need for diplomacy. Valeska's attractive manners produced an immediate effect upon Mrs. Tulliver's emotional, intuitive nature; and, seeing with her rare perception that frankness was the quickest and easiest method with her, Valeska boldly told her who she was, and offered her services.

Mrs. Tulliver was too full of her own forebodings not to grasp immediately at this unlooked for hope in her trouble. She confessed that her suspicions had been aroused, and, though they were not shared by her husband, she was convinced that the gang of boodling Aldermen, desperate at the prospect of conviction, were making underhanded attacks upon their chief enemy, the District Attorney. They were not of a sort to stop at any crime that would rid them of his strenuous prosecution.

Of Astro's fame as Master of Mysteries, Mrs. Tulliver had heard, and she willingly consented to lay the matter before him. His name was already known at the District Attorney's office through the many crimes that, in unofficial coöperation with the police, he had pursued and solved.

HER story, after reaching the studio, amply confirmed Astro's suspicions. Tulliver had, the week before the date set for the opening of the trial, worked hard night and day over the data. His material was complex and voluminous; it required all his energy to select the proper points of testimony, to arrange his plan of prosecution, and to divide the work to be done by his assistants. All had gone well till Saturday. He had worked at his office till noon, and then had gone to a barber shop in the vicinity of City Hall Square and been shaved and manicured. That night he had intended going to the house of a friend for an evening's entertainment and relaxation, before beginning upon the arduous, final preparations for the trial. These last important investigations he had put off till Sunday, thinking that the rest on Saturday night would help him to devote his whole energy to the case.

On Saturday night he showed extreme lassitude

and manifested an unwillingness to go out with his wife. She had induced him to attend the entertainment, however; but, his fatigue increasing, they had both returned early and retired. On Sunday he slept late. He was worried about the case; but felt almost unable to rise and go to work. He had, after breakfast, dragged himself to his study and shut himself up with his papers. There Mrs. Tulliver had found him fast asleep at dinner time. He made a second attempt to go about his work in the afternoon, and fell asleep a second time, showing extreme exhaustion. At nine o'clock he roused himself sufficiently to ask his wife to telephone to the judge of the court to postpone the case, and to notify his assistants of the necessary delay.

A doctor called on Monday against Tulliver's wishes and diagnosed it as nervous prostration. He had prescribed a recipe, and after taking it Tulliver had gradually recovered his customary state of health and energy. This attack of exhaustion, however, coming just before an important phase of the case was reached, and the rumors of bribery in connection with the District Attorney, which had already been voiced in some of the city papers, had affected him as deeply as they had disturbed Mrs. Tulliver. He showed no disinclination whatever to drop the case; in fact he was more ardent than ever in wishing to bring the boodlers to justice. But already his delays and apparent lack of interest had seriously damaged his political career in the minds of the people.

ASTRO listened to all this attentively, with only an occasional question. A pretty woman at all times, with a proud, spiritedly poised head and soft, dark eyes, Mrs. Tulliver's distress made her beauty pathetic. It was plainly evident that, much as she was moved by the fear of her husband's illness and the sacrifice of his political future, what affected her still more strongly was the fear of some stain on his reputation; and, perhaps, in the dim shadows of her mind, unacknowledged, but sinisterly insistent, was the specter of a doubt of his probity. She knew well enough the cunning and the ingratiating methods of political corruption, and, though she would not admit even to herself that her husband was venal, the horror of this potent, secret force prostrated her.

It was Astro himself who gave her back her courage and her faith. She regained her strength at his offers of assistance. As he spoke, slowly, gently, commandingly, as she watched his handsome, mysteriously sentient face, some of his secret power went from him to her. The very strangeness of that face, with its oriental calm, with its oriental wisdom, with its beatific sympathy, gave her trust. She sat, so, watching him, one hand in Valeska's hand, till he had finished.

One question, however, before she left, he put in a way to renew her alarm. "Who is your cook?" he asked.

"Why, we've had her only about nine months;



"The Manicure Brightened Up When Tulliver Came Over."

but she came recommended highly. Do you think—"

"Can you see to it that all his food is prepared under your personal supervision, or that he takes his lunches only at large, well known restaurants?"

She thought she could do both.

"Be careful, then," he said. "And, for the last thing, find out all his movements in what detail you can, both in the past and in the future. Telephone me every day what he intends to do. And, by the way, what is the date set for the opening of the trial?"

"Next Monday."

"Then we haven't much time. But we'll win!"

As she left the great studio Valeska accompanied her to the outer door. Here she paused and clutched the girl's hand. "What did he mean about the cook?" she demanded. "Does he think it can be as bad as that,—that they would try poison?"

"Oh, he's only anxious to take all the precautions possible."

"Then I shall have to tell my husband I have been here."

"As you please," said Valeska. "Only be sure that you have the most powerful defender in New York. Astro has never failed yet."

SHE returned to the studio, to find Astro already absorbed in a medical book. He had taken down a bound volume of "The Lancet," and pointed to it. "Look that over carefully and see if you can find that article on the 'Pathology of Fatigue.' I can't recall what year it came out; but it was the report of the experiments of an Austrian, I think."

She looked at him in surprise. "You have a theory already?"

"No, not quite; but there is a disturbance in my memory,—there's something I can't quite place, or account for; if I don't try too hard, it will float up unconsciously. That's why I want you to look it up. But our line of investigation is plain."

"The barber?"

"Or the manicure. I didn't dare ask about that. I don't want Tulliver to suspect. Of course she'll tell him everything; I can see that, I expected it. But I must get to that particular barber shop to-day and begin to watch."

"Is it poison, then?"

"Undoubtedly poison; but whether physical or moral I don't yet know."

"But you seemed to be so sure of his honesty."

"I knew she would tell him everything. It was the only way. There is always the chance of corruption. Dishonesty is as much a disease as chol-

era. One can become infected by it as well as by a germ. I said it was my business to know human nature; but no one can know it, except to be sure that it's liable to all sorts of dangers and diseases. No one is immune. We can only fight infection of all sorts. If this man Tulliver is being poisoned, I'll find out how and by whom, and I'll save him. If he is being corrupted morally, is there any less reason why I should help him? It may be the first time in his life—and the last. God knows! I know only that I like him, I admire his wife, and if I can beat that gang I'll do it! Selah. I have spoken."

IT was late that afternoon when Astro returned from his investigations. By his look, Valeska knew that he was worried. Mrs. Tulliver had telephoned and said that the District Attorney would be at his office all day and would return directly from there. From her tone it was evident that her husband did not take the seer's assistance so gratefully as she herself did. Astro listened with a frown.

"Well, I'll save him in spite of himself, then. I confess it looks dubious. I saw our old friend, Sergeant McGraw of the detective force, and he succeeded in finding out for me some of Tulliver's habits. He patronizes a small barber shop on Broadway, opposite the postoffice; but doesn't go there regularly. Most often drops in there on Saturdays. I went in and got a shave. There was a tow headed manicure in a corner, with about ten pounds of bracelets and a Marcel wave of the Eighth-ave. type, crisp as galvanized iron. I didn't like her, on several counts; I somehow felt wrong with her. I had my nails attended to, and she was too smooth. She never refuses an invitation to dinner, that girl."

"Now," he continued, "we can't possibly investigate this thing from the Brooklyn end. There are too many in that gang of boodlers for us to follow them all. So we have to trace it back from the District Attorney, and find some point of contact with the Aldermen. If Tulliver was bought up, he wouldn't have worked so hard up to Saturday noon. He would have taken it easy and put his assistants off. Something must have happened on Saturday, and if anything happened, whether he was doped or bribed, the only place for it to have happened was in that barber shop. It's too bad I can't trail her to-night; but I have a positive appointment with Colonel Mixter. You'll have to shadow the manicure. She leaves the shop at six o'clock; so you must hurry."

With that, he threw himself on his divan, spread

a pack of cards in front of him, and began "getting Napoleon out of St. Helena." It was a habit of his when most puzzled with his strange problems to rest his mind occasionally by a game of solitaire. It was a sort of mental bath from which he rose always refreshed and ready for a new attack of the question in hand.

"Did you find that article in 'The Lancet'?" he asked as Valeska was preparing to leave the studio.

"No," was her reply; "but I found a reference to it in an article on the anatomy of the vasomotor nerves. The name was Weichardt, wasn't it?"

"By Jove! that's it!" he cried joyfully. "Weichardt, Weichardt!" he repeated the name to himself. "I'll get it now! I'll just let that boil subconsciously awhile."

VALESKA took the subway down town, reaching the barber shop just in time to see, through the basement windows, an orange haired girl putting on her hat behind a screen in the corner. She nodded to the men at the chairs as she passed and came slowly up the steps to the street, still fingering the terrific pompadour that jutted from her forehead. She walked slowly down Broadway, glancing at her watch once, and loitering occasionally at shop windows. It was evident that she was a bit too early for some appointment. At the corner of Fulton-st. she stopped and waited.

It was not long before a man smoking a cigar came up to her and stopped without lifting his hat. Then he took the girl's arm familiarly, and the two walked to the subway entrance again, descended, and took a train back to the bridge station. Here they transferred to a Brooklyn train, and got off at the borough station.

Valeska had meanwhile not only kept on their track, but had secured a seat where she could watch them at close range. The man looked like a political heeler, a barkeeper, or a sport. He might indeed have been all three. The two seemed very friendly; the girl's strident laugh sounded more than once through the car. In Brooklyn they went to a flashy restaurant that was generally frequented by the sporting element. The man ordered dinner and wine. As the meal proceeded, the manicure's laugh grew louder, and she became more familiar. It was not a pleasant sight.

From here the two debouched upon the electric lighted sidewalk, debated for awhile at the curb, then got into a street car. At Waverly-ave. they got out and walked up to No. 1321. Here, rather

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HOW CHIEF WILKIE "SWEATS" A SUSPECT

By William Atherton Du Puy

CHIEF WILKIE of the Secret Service sat in his office in Washington and smoked his old black pipe. He was in a reminiscent mood and had been talking of the things of the past,—of the sleuths under him, scattered here and there throughout the country, and of the cases they had run to ground under his direction. His stories had been interrupted occasionally by a silent attendant who brought in a message,—now from an agent pursuing the smugglers of Chinamen across the Mexican border, now from one "roping" a counterfeiter in Boston. To each of these he had immediately despatched instructions; for he is the central guiding hand in all such cases, the exchange that directs their movements and weaves the divergent threads into the net that makes precarious the position of those offenders against the statutes directly in the province of the national Government.

"The greatest skill of it all," said the chief from back of his pipe, "is probably in sweating a suspect. Not that the process has much to do with the popularly accredited meaning of that term; for sweating in its right application, in this service at least, is no rough house intimidation of a victim, but a psychologic leading of his mind toward a certain end. The detective who properly sweats a man under arrest prepares for him a psychologic ladder down which he may climb. The easier and more graceful the descent is made, the more likely is the accused man to come down the ladder."

"The mind of a man who has committed a crime is constantly upon his misdeed. The realization of it is with him night and day, and it is no easy load he carries. It is the thing of them all that means most to him, and yet he may never mention it to a living soul. He must guard his every utterance and his every act, lest they betray him. He does not dare let his crime leave his consciousness for a minute. He naturally hungers for some one to whom he may unburden himself; for it goes hard with any man to keep the things of which he always thinks entirely to himself. He wants of all things to talk of them. A drear and lonely week in a cell will heighten all these tendencies."

"In addition to the knowledge of his crime that is always with him, the accused is often aware that the detective knows of his guilt positively. The officer is merely seeking confirmation of his knowledge and to get it into such shape as to be admissible as evidence."



Chief John E. Wilkie.

He wants a confession, and to get it he builds his ladder so cleverly that the criminal cannot resist the invitation and will scramble merrily down it.

"A case in point occurred during the exposition at St. Louis. A man called Graham or some such name was arrested at the race track for passing counterfeit money. On his person were found twenty-nine one-hundred-dollar bills that were bad, and plenty of good money. He was evidently a well-to-do man, eminently respectable in appearance, and was playing the ponies all the way across the board."

"Graham seemed surprised when informed that his money was counterfeit, and with apparent frankness told a story of the manner of his coming into possession of it. He said that he had found it in the Grand Central station at six o'clock the previous evening. It had been in an envelop and had ap-

peared in every way to be legitimate money. He had used it merely incidentally in making his bets as he might have used money out of any other pocket and with the feeling that he had plenty to replace it if occasion arose. Further, he stated that he had placed an advertisement in the papers for the owner of the money and would return it on proof of that ownership."

"This latter assertion proved to be true upon investigation. Despite the apparent correctness of the story, Graham was locked up pending a further look into the case. An examination of his past record showed that he was an engraver and had once been an employee of an establishment in Washington; but had later gone into business in New England, where his standing was of the best and where his acquaintances protested strongly against any intimation of guilt on his part."

"The facts that he had been an engraver in Washington and that he had an establishment of his own where the bills might be made, were strong circumstantial evidence against him. Then a single discrepancy was found in the story he had told of the finding of the money. The advertisement in one of the papers had been left at its office two hours before the time he claimed to have found the money. He had done what every man does at some point of his operations: he had made a mistake."

"With this information in hand, I went personally to sweat Graham. I began by asking him to keep

perfectly quiet and make no comment until I finished what I had to say. Then I told him his own story in the way I knew it would be most acceptable to him; for I had estimated my man. I began by stating the facts in connection with his life in Washington,—that he was an engraver by trade and an artist at his work. He had been an intelligent, studious, ambitious young man; but, above all, an artist. His greatest love was the pursuit of the calling he had chosen and perfecting himself in its minutest detail."

"I told him that he had become interested in engraving the paper money of the Government. It was a magnificent example of the art and had appealed to him. From the viewpoint of the critic and connoisseur there was nothing like it. He had copied the design on a bill as a painter would copy an original masterpiece, and had become absorbed in developing its perfections. He had printed the engraving he had made as an experiment, and had been greatly pleased with his work. It had looked well even in the black ink. He had wondered how it would look in the colors used by the Government. He had tried it, and the results had been pleasing to him as an artist and gratifying to him as a workman."

"Then he had wondered if his handiwork would pass as actual money. This would be the final test of the excellence of his work. He had tried a few bills, and their genuineness had never been questioned. He had made this thing that was as good as could be developed with all the combined skill and wealth of a great nation. All the money he wanted was his for the mere printing of it. He lost his head. He had not started out with the intention of being a counterfeiter; but in this way had drifted into it. He was in reality the artist and student, and not the criminal."

"As the ladder was woven for him, rung by rung, the accused man assumed an attitude of acquiescence. He had never explained to himself the manner in which he had drifted into the doing of this thing, and after all he was not so much to blame for it. He was pleased with the story, and not so greatly displeased with himself; for he had at least proved himself a great artist. He melted under the influence of so fascinating an interpretation of his acts and made a clean breast of it."

"It does not necessarily follow," concluded Chief Wilkie, "that the ladder is just the sort of structure that the criminal is entitled to disport himself upon, for his misdeeds may have been most premeditated and mercenary; but he is given the opportunity to unburden himself and to excuse himself, and the temptation is more than he can resist."

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to Valeska's surprise, the girl left the man abruptly, ran up the steps, took out a key, and entered. The man walked slowly back, boarded a car, and rode down town.

Valeska followed him. She got out with him at Preston-st., and from here her task was more difficult. Keeping at a safe distance, however, she saw him stop at a two-story wooden house. At that moment a man approaching from the other direction with two dogs held in leash met him. The two entered the house together, and Valeska approached and reconnoitered. As she passed, she heard the dogs barking, and mingled with the noise was the sound of whining, as of animals in pain. The lower windows were dark; but the three above, on the second floor, were lighted. Creeping softly up the steps, Valeska laid her ear to the keyhole and listened. There was a low but distinct sound, —a rumbling as of wheels turning, wheels with a heavy load, as if some machine was being laboriously worked.

TWO days passed, and each night Valeska took up the scent, following the manicure girl across to Brooklyn as before. Both times, however, she was alone. The first night she dined alone at a little dairy near the borough station and went to a vaudeville show afterward. The second night she went directly home. The next day was Saturday.

"We seem to have got nothing yet," she said to Astro that morning. "I confess I'm discouraged. If that man I saw is the go-between, he covers his tracks well. If he hands her any drug, it is impossible for us to detect it. If we could only get into that house on Preston-st!"

"That's impossible," said Astro; "it's too well guarded. I've been over there to see it. I was looking for a house to rent, you know, and found out enough to arouse my suspicions. The neighbors are gossiping about the place already. Dogs go in; but don't come out. There are moans and howls all night long, and it's getting to be a scandal. But to-day I hope to find out something definite about the relations that exist between Tulliver and that girl. McGraw has agreed to tip me off when Tulliver goes to the shop, and I think I can get a chance to watch the two together."

Nothing had been heard from Mrs. Tulliver in the meantime. To Valeska's mind that in itself was suspicious. Astro's story when he returned did not relieve her mind.

"I got in after Tulliver," he said, "and was shaved, just managing to miss my turn with the manicure lady. Tulliver had his nails polished, as usual. She brightened up considerably at sight of him. It seemed to me that she was excited. He talked and laughed a little with her; but not enough to prove any great intimacy. She was undoubtedly nervous, however. Once she went behind the screen and did something, I don't know what. But she had ample opportunity to convey any message to him without arousing the least suspicion. I confess I'm worried about him."

WITH this, Valeska had to be content for the time, and she heard no more till Monday morning. Then, upon her arrival at the studio, Astro met her with a black face.

"Tulliver is down again!" he said immediately. "Mrs. Tulliver telephoned yesterday at ten o'clock in the morning, while her husband was asleep. He absolutely refused to work, said he was exhausted, and insisted on taking a nap. He said he wasn't ill at all, only felt tired. It was plain enough that she is fearfully worried now, and will help us out with information whether he objects or not. You had better go and see her and get all the details."

Valeska lost no time in obeying him. Astro threw himself on the divan, refused all comers, and gave himself up to a struggle with his problem. Something in his memory balked. He was usually wonderfully in control of it, and the refusal tantalized him.

Valeska returned at eleven o'clock and reported that Tulliver had gone down to the office, though still listless and blue. Mrs. Tulliver's alarm had increased, and she was now willing to tell all she knew.

"I spoke to her as delicately as I could about the manicure girl," she said. "Mrs. Tulliver seemed a bit worried at the subject. She said that Tulliver had often spoken of her as an original, slangy type, whose conversation refreshed him after his hard work. In fact, that was his chief reason for having his nails done there,—so that he could listen to the girl's persiflage, to which he didn't even have to answer. That seemed to be her main talent, in fact; for Mrs. Tulliver said that she had a gift of gab, rather striking looks, and the ability to create a high and showy polish on men's nails. She is clumsy, though. She has managed her scissors so unskillfully that she has cut Mr. Tulliver's fingers twice."

Astro jumped to his feet. "Abracadabra!" he exclaimed, and stood staring at Valeska. "What's the matter?" "We're getting on!" He started to walk up and down. "Let me think it over again. I believe I've almost got it. Leave me alone here, and I'll do some deep sea diving in the crypts of my memory, if you'll pardon the metaphor. You look over the papers while I grope in the recesses."

Valeska left and took up the file of morning papers. She was not gone long, having found something almost immediately that seemed important enough to warrant her interrupting the Master of Mysteries.

"What do you think?" she exclaimed, appearing between the dull red velvet portières that screened the palmist's vast studio from the reception room. "That house at No. 1381 Preston-st. has been pulled by the police, at the instigation of the Society for Prevention

of Cruelty to Animals. They entered the place yesterday, and found a sort of treadmill where two dogs were working themselves almost to death, for no apparent reason whatever. There was a bed and a table and things in one of the rooms of the lower floor; but there was nothing up stairs but the dogs, the treadmill, and a table that looked as if it had been used for dissection."

ASTRO had stood listening to every word. As Valeska spoke, his face cleared. A smile appeared on his lips. He threw off his crimson silk robe, tossed his turban into a corner, and on the instant appeared as the virile, keen man of activity.

"I have it!" he exclaimed. "It is all over! District Attorney Tulliver will have no more mysterious attacks of fatigue! The boodling Brooklyn Aldermen will be prosecuted from now on with all despatch!"

He went up to Valeska, and gently led her to a seat, laughing at the wonder in her eyes.

"Listen," he said. "I had it all deep in my memory; but until this moment I couldn't make connections with it and apply my knowledge to this case. Now I recall everything. Herr Weichardt, a Munich pathologist, some years ago made some experiments which showed that fatigue was an actual pathological condition. In other words, he proved it was a disease, by discovering the germ and inoculating living organisms with it. He took some animals,—pigs, if I recall aright,—made them work till they were almost dead of fatigue, then removed the tired muscles and extracted the serum from them. With this he inoculated other animals. He found that a small dose of his serum culture caused all the characteristic symptoms of fatigue in the patient, and that a heavy dose produced even death."

"But how could this gang administer such a poison?"

"Through the manicure, whom they had engaged and paid, of course. All she had to do, after she had received the serum from the man you saw, was to dip her nail scissors into the solution, and then clip the cuticle so as to draw blood. The merest scratch would suffice, and no noticeable sore in the finger would be caused; but the toxic germs would permeate the veins and be distributed all over the body. It was the fact that she had cut Tulliver's finger that aroused my memory; then the story of the treadmill instantly suggested Weichardt's experiments. It was a devilishly subtle plot. You see, they didn't dare actually to poison him, or give him any easily recognized disease. All they needed was to put him out of business for a day or so at critical moments when they needed time to prepare their fight."

"Then you'll tell Tulliver?" "Certainly. With the police behind him, he can easily run down the plot and do what he wishes about it. Most likely he'll see that the manicure girl leaves town, and let the rest go."

VALESKA looked thoughtfully at the huge crystal ball on an ebony table in front of her and spoke as if to herself. "I wish some other symptoms besides fatigue could be transmitted in that way. One might infuse some of the District Attorney's own strenuousity and honesty, for instance, into persons who need moral stamina."

"I can think of better things than that to do," Astro gazed dreamily at the pretty, flushed face in front of him. His eyes lingered on the dark, curling hair, the lovely curve of the neck, the graceful, girlish hands, the sensitive mouth, the cunningly molded figure, and he sighed.

"What would you try to give me, if you were undertaking the experiment?" Valeska asked, without looking up.

Astro did not answer. Instead he took one more long, tender look at her, and walked swiftly into his laboratory.

The next *Seer of Secrets* story, "The Heir to Soothoid," will appear February 28.

WHEN THEY FIRST USED SOAP

THE term "soap" seems to indicate a Germanic origin. Thus, in Anglo-Saxon, it is called *sāpe*, in German *seife*, in Icelandic *sāpa*, in Swedish *sāpa*, in Danish *såbe*, in Flemish *seppie*, which latter Skinner derives from the Anglo-Saxon *sāpin*, to macerate, but which, according to Wachter, might as well be derived from the Anglo-Saxon *suben*, to purify.

It is also said that soap received its name from the town of Savonna, near Genoa. The wife of a fisherman of that town, having heated lye of soda in a vessel impregnated with olive oil, thus accidentally discovered this composition. Many scholars believe that soap was unknown to the ancients; but there is documentary evidence in support of the contrary opinion.

There is found no trace whatever of soap or an analogous substance among the Greeks. When Homer in his *Odyssey* describes Princess Nausica washing linen with her servants, he fails to mention any substance except water used in washing. Among the Romans, however, soap was known from the first century of our era. Pliny writes, "They also use the soap invented by the Gauls, for giving the hair a blond color. It is made of tallow and ashes. The best is made of beech ashes and goat suet. There are two kinds, soft and liquid. Both are used by the Germans, and the men use them more than the women."

In the ruins of Pompeii soap houses have been found, which prove beyond doubt that the preparation of soap was known to the ancient Romans.



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